Graeme Park
Keith Valley Road
Horsham vicinity
Horsham Township
Montgomery County
Pennsylvania

HABS No.PA-579

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1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

ADDENDUM TO:
GRAEME PARK
(Fountain Low)
(Horsham Plantation)
859 County Line Road
Horsham vicinity
Montgomery County
Pennsylvania

HABS PA-579
PA,46-HORM,1-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
Addendum to
GRAEME PARK
(Fountain Low, Horsham Plantation)

HABS No. PA–579

Location: Approximately twenty-five miles from Center City Philadelphia in Horsham Township, Pennsylvania. Graeme Park is located two miles northwest of U.S. 611 at 859 County Line Road on the northern edge of Willow Grove Naval Air Station.

The estate encompasses forty-two acres in a semi-rural area, however suburban development there is growing at a rapid pace. At present, most of the estate's acreage is leased to a farmer who cultivates corn for livestock feed. The eighteenth-century house and the nineteenth-century barn are located at the end of a quarter-mile long driveway that is entered from County Line Road. The house is sited on lowland extending between a stream on its south side and the Neshaminy Creek to its north.

Present Owner And Occupant: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, administered by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

Present Use: House museum open for public tours.

Significance: The mansion house at Graeme Park—a rare surviving example of early colonial American architecture—was conceived of as a utilitarian structure on a Governor's plantation, the structure became the Georgian-styled centerpiece of a country retreat and backdrop for an intellectual salon that largely concentrated on the development of genteel republican ideologies. Graeme Park, originally called Fountain Low, rose on an improved portion of Lieutenant Governor Sir William Keith's 1,735 acre Pennsylvania plantation. The three-story structure was built in 1722 probably envisioned as a malt-house for the production of alcohol. In 1739, the plantation was purchased by Dr. Thomas Graeme, the son-in-law of Keith, and renovated during his ownership into a high-style Georgian summer dwelling for himself and his family, which in the mid-1760s became their year-round residence.

After Graeme's death in 1772, his daughter Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson inherited the house.[1] A well-known Philadelphian poet

[1]The spelling of the name "Fergusson" takes two forms in historic texts: "Fergusson" and "Ferguson." "Fergusson" is used in this report, though some of the notes and bibliography use the alternative form.

and intellectual, Fergusson entertained many important ideologues of the American Revolution at her salon, including Benjamin Rush and Francis Hopkinson, which at first convened in her family's Philadelphia residence and later at the Horsham country house. For Elizabeth Fergusson, Graeme Park's country setting was ultimately her own constructed landscape whose high-style dwelling and vast grounds provided an appropriate backdrop and laboratory for refined intellectual thought and action. The controlled pastoral landscape of Graeme Park was, for Fergusson and her friends, a place which beheld nature's virtue and provided an appropriate environment for intellectual contemplation.

Twentieth-century constructs of Graeme Park's history transformed the building into a regional site of public memory. On account of its vague history, a wide array of interpretations have been created for the site, ranging from the evocative (or fanciful) and sentimental to the more pragmatic. Associations with Governor Keith conjure up images of colonial grandeur, making the mansion house and adjacent grounds at Graeme Park a source of regional identity and pride. Over the years, it has served as a mecca for architects and historians in search of colonial era remnants. Intrigued by its architectural embellishments, unusual plan, and lost lore, they have been eager to provide justification for the site's physical realities. However, unless further documentary evidence is uncovered, Graeme Park will remain a valued, but a much contested cultural landscape.

PART I: HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Years of erection: ca. 1722–1737. In 1719, Governor Sir William Keith obtained the 1,200-acre plantation from the Pennsylvania colony as repayment for personally funding a number of public projects. The land was originally granted to Samuel Carpenter, the colony's treasurer. Carpenter's grant was rescinded, however, after he failed to account for 2000 pounds of the colony's capital collected to fund an assault against the French in Canada. Soon after he acquired the land, Keith purchased another 535 acres adjoining the original 1,200.

   Between 1719 and 1722, Keith constructed at least one building and cleared a small area of land in the central portion of his property. In January 1721, Keith declared his intention to build a "small Distillery & Brewery for the good of the country." While at this time, Keith stated "I have yet no view to a dwelling house or anything that's ornamental," he

suggested that he would later consider "a smal Retreat & nourishment to old age that comes on a pace."[2] He contracted with mason John Kirk in December 1721 to build a structure at a cost of 100 pounds. In a letter written in January 1722, Keith revealed that the building was not yet completed; he stated, "our stills are not yet set up for the hard weather does not suffer our people to work."[3] In a January 1722 address to the Pennsylvania Assembly, Keith further described the incomplete production site:

> I have lately formed the Design of a considerable Settlement amongst you, in order to manufacture and consume Grain, for which there is at this Time, no profitable Market Abroad. And although this Project will doubtless at first, prove very chargeable and expensive to me, yet if it meets with your Approbation, and the Good-will of the People, I am well assured it cannot fail of answering my purpose, to do a real service to the Country…"[4]

It is clear that by this time the project had not progressed from the "Design" stage and the construction remained unfinished. There is no known archival evidence that depicts the building during the years spanning from 1722 to 1737. A 1737 advertisement for the sale of Keith's land describes the entirety of the plantation:

> twenty miles from town, a plantation called Horsham, consisting of five hundred acres of land, seventy-five of which are clear'd and improved ready and fit for Fall Grain of all sorts; besides twelve acres of well-improved meadow. Together with a large Stone House and a good barn, all in order for a tenant to enter upon. There is also on the said Plantation, a large stone house three stories high, sixty feet in length and thirty five wide, each story well floor'd and lighted, originally design'd for a Malt House, but at present seems better calculated for a company of Linen Weavers, having a large stream of water passing by the End of the said house, and a fine spring running by the back part thereof, wheereon is a very good bleaching green, which renders the whole extremely commodious for a Linen Manufactory.[5]

This quote suggests that while the building was largely completed, it was either not entirely furnished for production or not effectively designed for malting.

2. Architect: Unknown. Given the common collaborative design processes used in colonial America, it is probable that Keith was intimately involved

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[2]William Keith to Cadwallader Colden, 9 January 1721, *The Letters and Papers of Cadwallader Colden 1688-1776,*vol. 1, eds. New York Historical Society (1973; reprint, New York: AMS Press) 138.

[3]W.K to C.C., January, 1722, *Letters and Papers of Cadwallader Colden,* vol. 1, 139.

[4]Pennsylvania Archives 8th series, II (1931), 1386.

[5]Ad for the sale of Graeme Park, *American Weekly Standard,* September 15, 1737.

in the malt house design. As it stands, the structure's overall form and dimensions reflect the interior spatial requirements for a malt house—a great deal of open floor-space; ceiling heights which need to be 12 to 18 feet; and in overall dimensions—a long, single-room deep building.[6] In his *History of Virginia*, Keith reveals an interest in the architecturally tasteful outbuildings in Williamsburg, Virginia.[7] Independent of whether he was the design's primary author, the northern façade's orderly coursework was probably an attempt to create a useful yet decorative building, in the manner of the admired Williamsburg examples.

Documentary evidence indicates that Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson and her salon, like most upper-class Americans at the time, had an intellectual interest in architecture and may have influenced decisions made by her father in the retrofitting of the building between 1755 and 1765. The renovations transforming the original utilitarian edifice into the Georgian mansion house almost certainly occurred within this nine-year period. A 1755 letter written by Thomas Graeme to John Penn noted that at Graeme Park there was "not much yet regarding the House and Gardens" indicating that the high-style domestic retrofitting of the building was probably not in progress.[8] A *terminus post quem non* of 1764 is drawn from a letter written by Ann Graeme to Elizabeth (then visiting England) which included designations of "entry," "dining room," and "office" for interior spaces and points to the existence of interior room divisions, if not full completion of the interior fittings.

3. Original and subsequent owners, uses: The original 1,735 acres were sold in sections at different dates throughout the history of Graeme Park. The list of owners below includes only those people who possessed the section of land on which the mansion house was located.

    a. 1719—the Pennsylvania colony issued Governor Sir William Keith 1200 acres; he then purchased 535 adjoining acres. Keith intended to use the land for the production of alcohol and other economic pursuits.
    b. 1726—Graeme Park was placed in a trust for debt repayment. Over the next eleven years, more than half of the estate's land was sold-off.
    c. 1737—the property trustees sold the entire estate—the remaining 835 acres—to Joseph Pound for 750 pounds.

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[6]See, J.C. Loudon, *An Encyclopedia of Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture and Furniture* (London: Longman, Brown, and Green, 1839) 401; Edward Skeate, *The Malsters Guide* (London: W.R. Loftus, 1869) 120, 121, 127, 135.

[7]See William Keith, *History of Virginia with Remarks on the Trade and Commerce of that Colony* (London: S. Richardson, 1738).

[8]HSR, 26–27.

d. 1739—Dr. Thomas Graeme, William Keith's son-in-law, received the property deed for a sum of 760 pounds. It is believed that Graeme bought the land immediately after Pound's 1737 purchase.
e. 1772—Graeme dies and his daughter, Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson was willed the title.
f. 1791—Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson transferred the estate—less 200 acres which her estranged husband previously sold while in England—to Dr. William Smith, the husband of her deceased niece Anna. In return, Smith settled all of her debts and a promised an annual income of $200. Smith rented the land to tenant farmers and the house was used as both a temporary dwelling and for storage.
g. 1801—during his years of ownership, William Smith sold-off sections of the estate. In this year, he entered into a contract with Samuel Penrose selling the remaining 205 acres which included the mansion house for $8,170. Penrose farmed some of the land himself and rented-out other sections. In 1810, he constructed a new house on high ground 700' southwest of the eighteenth-century dwelling.
h. 1821—Samuel Penrose sold the land to his son, William, for $14,000.
i. 1865—William Penrose and wife Hannah willed the land to their five children. Later that year, Abel Penrose purchased the land from his siblings.
j. 1893—Abel Penrose died and the land was willed to his two sons. Throughout the Penrose years, Graeme Park continued to be farmed and the eighteenth-century house was used for a variety of purposes, but not lived in full time.
k. 1920—the land was sold to Welsh Strawbridge for $33,999; Strawbridge farmed the acreage.
l. 1958—the Strawbridges donated the house at Graeme Park and 42 adjacent acres to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

4. Builder: John Kirk. A skilled mason, Kirk lived in Abington, Pennsylvania and directed the construction of such noteworthy structures as the Kirk Homestead (his family seat), and the Lukens house where Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson spent the final years of her life.

5. Original plans and construction: As originally constructed, the house at Graeme Park contained three-stories and was one-room deep. A winder stair led from the ground floor up to the third floor. Given the open space needs of a malt house, it is probable that the original plan was open and that all the current partition walls in the house were renovations from the Graeme era. A 1984 paint analysis concluded that the structure remained unpainted until the Graeme period. This analysis discovered that the window sills contained a layer of dirt beneath the earliest layer of paint and it is possible to conclude that they sat unpainted for many years after

construction. Conversely, the partition walls did not harbor this dirt layer beneath the original coat of paint. Thus, it is possible to conclude that the walls were constructed at a much later date than the windows and were immediately painted; furthermore, the first layer of wall paint dates from the Graeme era renovations in the 1750s and 1760s.[9]

6. Alterations and additions: The house has never received any additions, however there have been numerous instances of alteration and renovation.

The first known alteration to Graeme Park focused on the landscape surrounding the house and was undertaken during Thomas Graeme's ownership. In 1755, Graeme wrote, "I have a park which Incloses 300 acres of land…," and that "if you consider it as a piece of Beauty and Ornament to a dwelling, I dare venture to say that no nobleman in England but would be proud to have it on his seat or by his house."[10] In addition to the landscape changes, Graeme also commissioned a number of new outbuildings during his tenure at the estate.

1755–1764. Extant physical evidence shows that within a decade of purchasing the property, Graeme finished-off some of the three-story structure's interior spaces, albeit in a very simple manner.[11] The extensive alterations and interior appointments were most likely not started until after 1755. An exterior door located on the east end of the north façade and opening onto the parlor was closed-up in an effort to establish symmetrical room articulation in the parlor, and also worked to provide greater balance on the north facade. This action was accomplished by infilling the doorway's lower portion with stone and the upper portion with a false window facing the exterior backed by paneling on the interior. The infilling of a second story window on the west wall probably dates to this period of alteration as well.

At this time, Graeme also directed the partition wall construction, and in some cases, movement and reconstruction, on the building's three floors.[12] A closed-stringer scissors stair with a continuous run from the first to the third floor replaced the original winder staircase. He commissioned decorative wood moldings, paneling, and mantels for the first and second floor rooms, and further embellished the interior with fine plaster, paint, and wallpapers—applied to the former malt house's barren walls. Marble and/or imported Dutch tiles were fixed around the fireplace openings on

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[9]Martin Jay Rosenblum, R.A. and Associates, "Graeme Park Historic Structures Report," (hereafter HSR) Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1987, 122-131, 201, 218.

[10]Thomas Graeme to John Penn, 1 July, 1755, Penn Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (hereafter referred to as "HSP").

[11]HSR, 96, 109, 111-112, 122-131, 176.

[12] HSR, 124-128, 176.

the first and second stories; the fireplace in the western room of the ground floor was reduced in size from its original 8'-0" width. With these changes and a number of other small-scale renovations, Dr. Thomas Graeme transformed an unfinished structure, originally conceived of for the production of alcohol, into a high-style country residence.

Ca. 1801–1920. It is probable that the floors in the center and western ground-floor rooms of the mansion house—originally lower and of masonry—were raised, possibly with wood from the unneeded Keith or Graeme-era outbuildings.[13] The raising of the floors may likely have occurred early in the Penrose ownership as investigations have shown a great deal of interior cosmetic work—including the laying of wallpaper—was completed prior to the new house construction in 1810.[14]

1958–present. The house was subject to a great deal of necessary renewal and interpretive restoration. On the exterior, the stonework was repointed and the tin and shingle roof was replaced with a cedar shingle roof. New support posts and foundations were installed in the cellar and the floor framing was augmented under two of the ground-floor rooms. Changes were made to a number of the windows. The six-over-six double hung sash in the dormers on the north side was replaced with six-over-nine sash. The nine-over-twelve double hung sash on the second floor were replaced with nine-over-nine sash; two of the three third-floor dormers on the south side were removed. Where needed on the interior, the house was repainted and replastered, and the interior carpentry was patched, mended and, if necessary, replaced. Some of the eighteenth-century wall panels and moldings were taken down and repaired. Electric in-floor heaters were installed on each of the three floors and the first and second floors were wired with electrical outlets; an overhead light was placed in the cellar.

B. Historical Context:

Historical Interpretation Past and Present: Governor Keith's Presence at Fountain Low

Graeme Park, originally called Fountain Low, was the one of the improved portions of Lieutenant Governor Sir William Keith's 1,735 acre Pennsylvania plantation. The extant three-story, one-room deep house was conceived of as a malt house—a utilitarian structure where grain would have been processed for later conversion into alcohol—and started in 1722. While the shell was finished the interiors were not completed until after its sale to Dr. Thomas Graeme. In 1739, Graeme, Keith's son-

[13]Archaeology Report, 1969, Graeme Park Archive.
[14]HSR, 190.

in-law, purchased the plantation and during his tenure converted the malt house into a summer dwelling for his family's seasonal, and later, full-time use. After his death in 1772, Graeme's daughter Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson—a well-known Philadelphia poet and intellectual—inherited the house and continued to use it as her full-time residence. In 1801, the Penrose family purchased Graeme Park, constructed a new primary dwelling, and left the eighteenth-century mansion house vacant.

Because very little documentation exists for the Graeme-era renovations, Graeme Park's history as a dwelling house has been left open to debate. The earliest interpretations, appearing in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Philadelphia histories, assumed that the building was originally constructed as a residence and that the later renovations were merely augmented its as-constructed elegance.[15] In many of these antiquarian sources, Graeme Park was described as a site of colonial grandeur where the Governor "lived in a state unknown in Philadelphia and more resembling the manorial regime of some of the wealthier southern plantations" and where "lavish entertaining" was carried on in splendor.[16] Although a few new studies have questioned the extent of "lavish entertaining" during the Keith era at Graeme Park, most references to the edifice continue to describe it as both an early eighteenth-century house and as the site of distinctive Keithian entertainment.[17]

Why did this gentrified history develop? In his study of American historiography, *Imagined Histories,* Gordon Wood argues that America's anxiety over immigration and urban congestion as caused by industrialization initiated idealized early histories.

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[15]See Harold Donaldson Eberlein, and Horace Mather Lippincott, *Colonial Homes of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: J.P. Lippincott, 1912), Ellis Paxson Oberholtzer, *Philadelphia A History of the City and its People* (Philadelphia: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1880), J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History Of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: L.H. Everts & Co., 1984), and Agnes Repplier, *Philadelphia The Place and The People* (New York: MacMillan, 1925).

[16]Eberlein, and Lippincott, *Colonial Homes of Philadelphia,* 300.

[17]HSR, appendix II. The report included the findings of a paint analysis taken of various walls and windows on all three floors of the building. The results from the analysis described a very different scenario than what was earlier imagined in the historical texts: the results described an unfinished structure without paint during the Keith era, and probably without walls. The problem of explanation for the structure's asymmetrical floor plan and facades, which eliminated the building from falling into any reasonable category of building type for people of Keith's class, was also resolved by the Historic Structures Report; see Mark Reinberger, "Graeme Park and the Three-Cell Plan," in *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture,* vol. 4, eds. Thomas Carter, and Bernard L. Herman, (Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1991). In the late 1980s, at the highpoint of the excitement over the new field of vernacular architecture, Graeme Park became an example of "a lost type in colonial architecture," which qualified it for vernacular status. The problem with Reinberger's interpretation is that neither archival evidence nor context or memory leads to this conclusion. Graeme Park is also described as a "lost type in colonial architecture" in Roger Moss, *Historic Houses of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998) 186–187.

> During the later part of the nineteenth century the colonial past became less and less a period of authentic historical actors and events and more and more a nostalgic repository of an imagined and mythic America—a simple bucolic world that was free of the sprawling slums and ethnic diversity of a modern urban society.[18]

The early histories of Graeme Park were constructed within this larger trend and created a space of regional identity where the invented past served as a cultural reference point for turn-of-the-century Philadelphians. Graeme Park became a memorial, a colonial shrine, to remind both immigrants and "older-stock" Americans that they *did* have a history. It was necessary for Graeme Park to be remembered as a dwelling house because the intangible images of Governor Keith needed a symbolic place, a setting, in an effort "to embed public memory in narrative elements of buildings."[19] At a time when it was no longer possible to experience the nation as a new and relatively unadulterated place, and when immigration and industrialization were rapidly transforming the cultural landscape, historical imagination emerged as a method for the construction of nationhood.[20]

The "smoking gun" upheld as nearly conclusive evidence that the large stone structure at Fountain Low/Graeme Park was conceived of as Governor Keith's fine country house is the presence there, in 1726, of vast quantities of household, luxury, and agricultural goods—"the inventory of 1726 indicates that, after Keith was dismissed as Governor, his household was moved to Horsham."[21] A recent study casts doubt on Keith's life in Horsham—"how much Keith lived at Fountain Low is uncertain"—but it does not discard the idea that the structure was meant to be a country house from the start.[22] The investigation correctly acknowledges the probability that the contents of the Governor's house in Philadelphia were moved to Graeme Park after Keith lost the governorship. It even notes, based on the odd object-type listing of the 1726 inventory as opposed to the almost ubiquitous room-content method of listing, that these goods were probably crated and in storage. The report, however, refuses to accept the possibility that these goods were stored in the shell of an unused utilitarian structure, but rather states they existed in an "unfinished house."

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[18]Gordon Wood, *Imagined Histories* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998) 149.

[19]Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place* (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1995) 47.

[20]See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York: Verso, 1991) and Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism* (New York: Routledge, 1998).

[21]HSR, 13.

[22]Ibid.

The authors cite the common unfinished state of many colonial houses and a quote from son Robert Keith regarding the presence of his parents' portraits at Horsham as evidence of partially completed domestic space—"with the family's fortunes declining, it seems very likely that the Keiths lived in an unfinished house."[23] However, is it implausible that the goods were stored in what was actually a substantial, though decidedly non-domestic, structure while the family lived in another edifice on the grounds or even inhabited a portion of the large, failed malt house? Their fortunes and Sir Keith's colonial power were undisputedly in major decline and surely the finely crafted building shell at Fountain Low, even as more open production space, would have been more than adequate for shelter. Furthermore, as noted in the report, Sir Keith for the most part remained in Philadelphia (leaving permanently for England in 1728) and given his documented economic ill-treatment of his wife, probably cared little that she and their children resided in what was probably "genteel poverty." At her death, "Lady Keith owned very little" and it seems likely that economic realities forced her to sell much of the stored estate for survival.[24] Consequently, the movement of the portable Keith goods to Fountain Low does not conclusively support the theory that the structure built by Keith in the 1720s was ever intended to serve a domestic function. This conclusion, as will be shown, is supported by both documentary and physical evidence.

Throughout the twentieth century, the architectural histories of Graeme Park primarily surveyed the building's architectural features and either accepted the constructed social contexts of Graeme Park as documented in the general histories of Philadelphia or ignored them all together. The problem with many traditional architectural historical evaluations is that they view buildings as objects, in a vacuum, with little or no regard for complex contexts or their historical spatial surroundings. Architectural historian Dell Upton argues that it is both the seen and unseen in the landscape—architecture plus surroundings—that defines historical space:

> A fruitful approach to landscape would be to start from its claim that it is a complete record of evidence and to inquire why that claim is effective—while demonstrating how much the scene demands that we do not see. By picking apart the seen and unseen, we can begin to get at the variety of human experience in a way that shatters the landscape is pretenses. This conjunction of seen and unseen, then, draws our attention to the experience of landscape as well as its initial creation. It emphasizes the relative roles of vision and intangible in the interpretation of landscape.[25]

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[23] Ibid., 14.
[24] Ibid., 17.
[25] Dell Upton, "Seen, Unseen and the Scene," in *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes,* eds. Paul Groth and Todd W. Bressi (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997) 176.

This essay focuses on Graeme Park as an all-encompassing landscape where architecture, ideology, power relations, gender issues, and innovative agricultural production converged as parts of a constructed whole. By examining the lives, words, and thoughts of those who lived at Graeme Park, as well as the memories of those who were a part of its living culture, this essay places the mansion house at Graeme Park within its greater physical and cultural landscape.[26]

Spatial and Functional Transformations: Fountain Low to Graeme Park

In 1739, Dr. Thomas Graeme purchased his father-in-law's abandoned malt house. This site, as well as a copper and iron-ore mine, contributed to Governor Keith's dream of tearing a financial fortune from the wilderness; he desired to rule over this fortune in the same manner as his feudal ancestors had done for hundreds of years at Bodham Castle in Aberdeenshire, Scotland. Unfortunately for Keith, his dream failed and this failure was physically embodied in the unfinished and lifeless shell of a large utilitarian building. In addition to this structure, a tenant house and a barn, situated on a few cleared acres on the extreme northern end of what was then Philadelphia County, remained the estate's only other improvements. By 1739, the goals for spatial organization which Keith had constructed, literally and figuratively, became obsolete as aspirations for the estate as an economic and production enterprise were largely crushed. Graeme's purchase of the estate in that year introduced a redefinition of the site, as Keith's production-oriented "Fountain Low" became the leisure-oriented "Graeme Park."

Dr. Graeme purchased the land in 1739—for what ultimate purpose at that time is not known. What is certain is that sometime between 1755 and 1764, probably with the assistance of his daughter and her coterie of friends, Graeme transformed the utilitarian landscape into a gentleman's country estate with a finely-detailed residence as its centerpiece surrounded ornamental gardens and 300 acres of parkland. By 1750, Philadelphia had become the largest, wealthiest, and most populous city in the English colonies and a tradition of the most prominent families keeping country estates had already been established.

> But for all one's fine town house with its rich furnishings and large library, the true mark of having arrived was the ownership of a country estate…In the mansions some of the landlords had collections of art bought in Europe. Outside the houses there were

[26]It would be naïve to argue that notions of space remembered by insiders recount an ordered and unimagined truth about a specific place; on the contrary, the memories of a historic space by those who lived within it, reveals only the inceptions, resolutions, and myths that it chose to retain. Yet, an examination of the fragments of collective memory tells us what intangibles endured, and at the same time, what was forgotten.

> invariably large flower gardens, greenhouses, and fishponds. The country seats not only were places where the wealthy could go for the joys of country life, but also served as refuges when epidemics struck the city.[27]

This tradition gained speed in the third decade of the eighteenth century as such extant estates as Bel Air and Stenton rose on spacious grounds outside of Penn's city. Ultimately, the largest concentration appeared in the rolling landscape to the northwest along the Schuylkill as far as Germantown. Formulating a country estate may not have been the initial impetus for Graeme's purchase as Horsham lay a bit further from Philadelphia than most of the other estates, but Graeme soon transferred his interest in Fountain Low to its ultimate transformation into Graeme Park—a country retreat for himself and his family. While the Graemes were certainly connected with the most prominent Philadelphia families and probably could have afforded to construct a fabulous, high-style mansion from the ground up, he chose to finish a failed utilitarian structure into his relatively remote country retreat. His decision to do this could very well have stemmed from simple cost—why waste extensive monetary resources on an entirely new house sited on more expensive grounds closer to the city, when the solidly constructed exterior building shell already existed in a pleasant setting?

Regardless of his purchase motivation, Graeme and his family set out to transform the unfinished building shell into a Georgian showpiece. While his alterations to the malt house were probably underway before some of the most ambitious colonial gentry houses were started—for example Mount Pleasant (1761) and Cliveden (1763–1767)—numerous models already existed in the locality as well as in books like James Gibbs's *A Book of Architecture* (1728). While the exact layout of the malt house's interior divisions and chimney stacks is not known, Graeme's goal would not be so easy to complete. The malt house was a single-room deep structure, long and narrow, and, clearly, a fully articulated central-passage plan, with four or more rooms opening off the central passage, was out of the question. However, within the perimeter restrictions of the one-room deep plan, Graeme finished off a country house with all of the requisite social spaces and formal presentation. Upon entry from the single northern doorway, one encountered a small entry and stairhall, that while modest in size provided vital circulation space and social buffering for the rooms opening off of it. Most importantly, Graeme had two high-style entertainment spaces constructed in his house on the eastern sides of the

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[27]Theodore Thayer, "Town Into City, 1746–1765," *Philadelphia: A 300-Year History*, ed. Russell F. Weigley (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1982): 94–95.

first and second stories, connected by a comparatively constrictive, yet still graciously appointed stair.[28]

Graeme Park's mansion house staircase ascended across the door from the parlor and terminated on the second floor directly in front of the entrance to the parlor chamber. Given the constrictive building shell and an inability have two grand rooms on the first floor; the size and appointment of these eastern rooms; the spaces' location in regard to the stair; the colonial tradition for having entertainment spaces on more than one floor; and—perhaps the most compelling fact—the presence of a number of well-appointed and heated rooms elsewhere on the second and third stories for use as sleeping chambers, Graeme clearly conceived of two fashionable entertaining spaces stacked one over the other and tied together by an elegant stair.

In her 1787 advertisement for the sale of Graeme Park, Elizabeth Fergusson noted that the second story included three "bedchambers," this designation, however, does not negate the argument that the parlor chamber was initially conceived of as public space. The room function may have changed during the period after her father's 1772 death. Furthermore, even if this room was never intended solely for entertaining, Elizabeth Collins Cromley asserts that second-story bedchambers of prosperous colonial households were often used for small entertainment, and occasionally for public events—in which case its expensive appointment would be justified and logical.[29]

Between 1755 and 1764 Thomas Graeme, probably aided in part by his well-read and intelligent daughter Elizabeth, transformed the failed production site of Fountain Low into his own high-style country estate of Graeme Park. This transformation was in keeping with Philadelphia gentry tendencies for having both an opulent townhouse in Philadelphia as well as a rural retreat—generally to the north of Penn's city. When he died in 1772, Graeme willed the estate to his daughter, who had, since her youth, enlivened the status-symbol house and grounds with an intellectual salon.

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[28]Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992) 119–120. Here Bushman notes that "in most elegant houses of the eighteenth century, people entertained on two floors, and stairs facilitated circulation among the spaces used for music, dancing, cards, and refreshment." Representative of such an arrangement of formal, public spaces inside a genteel dwelling is the east side of Graeme Park, with its two, well-finished rooms and connecting stair. The embellishment, moreover, provided a refined backdrop for the Graemes' and Fergusson's social performances.

[29]Elizabeth Collins Cromley, "History of American Beds and Bedrooms," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, ed. Thomas Carter and Bernard L. Herman, vol. IV (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1989) 178.

Intellectual Animation: Graeme Park as Setting for Republican Discourse

For the relatively short inhabited history of Graeme Park, the dominant historical personality—though entirely understudied—was undoubtedly Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson. Fergusson and her intellectual coterie constructed the third, and perhaps most poignant, layer of meaning for the residence; this salon took control of the senior Graeme's high-style status symbol and employed it as a genteel backdrop to a thoroughly enlightened discourse on republicanism and other intellectual pursuits. Although her knowledge of and interest in architecture hint at the possibility of contributions to the Graeme Park renovations under her father's tenure, it was her control and directorship of both intellectual and everyday life at the estate, before and after his death, that is most significant. Fergusson animated the country retreat with civil and republican discourse and is most likely responsible for the ultimate form of the garden acreage surrounding the dwelling. She extended weekend invitations to the intellectual offspring of Philadelphia's elite where they dueled with poetry and reverenced the divine origins of virtue. While Graeme Park served this more sociable and quasi-public function, it was also a very private space where the natural world's perceived virtues provided inspiration for Fergusson's poetry, reflection, and experimental horticulture and agricultural production.[30]

By the mid-eighteenth century, colonial America's largest cities—Boston, New York, Newport, Philadelphia, Charleston—had completed their transformation from frontier ports into well-established centers of trade. As the largest of the eighteenth-century colonial cities, Philadelphia was particularly successful in its transformation to an emerging market economy. This new economy created a distinctly modern set of social relations where power was no longer reserved for the titled; on the contrary, the new elite was largely composed from members of the emerging merchant class. This merchant class aligned itself with the Whigs of the English Civil War and their politically and philosophically progressive thinking, as well as with French and English philosophers of the Enlightenment.[31] While most of the merchant class cared little for revolutionary theory beyond Lockean notions of private property, a minority sought to actually recreate the political and intellectual institutions described in English Whig and Enlightenment ideologies. From early in the 1750s, a circle of friends formed a literary salon led by

[30]See David Shields, *Civil Tongues & Polite Letters in British America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1997). Shields argues that Fergusson's salon was centered on "civility" or polite and mannerly conservation that colonists copied from England. This essay agrees that civility was certainly present in the salon at Graeme Park, but that within the context of "civility" there was a discourse of an emerging ideology, republicanism. Thus, for the remainder of this essay it is assumed that civility was present at the salon.

[31]See Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1967).

Fergusson and based on European models; it initially met at the Graeme family's residences in Philadelphia and at Graeme Park.

America's revival of classical republicanism originated in opposition politics in the chaotic years leading up to the Revolution.[32] As with revivals in general, American republicanism was a vernacular theory; although its primary influences were drawn from the writings of the English Real Whigs of the English Civil War, the theory also included the postulated determinations of the French Enlightenment, Italian Renaissance, and ancient Greece. The cornerstone of republicanism rested on the principle of civic virtue—the will to place the good of the commonwealth over individual aspirations and reward. Between 1765 and 1787, republicanism emerged as the revolutionary ideology that rallied Americans to challenge English tyranny. The Graeme Park salon was a construction of ideological invention and indoctrination where the various influences on republicanism were explored and celebrated in literary and artistic exhibition. The culmination of the discourse at the "Saturday night soirees" aided in creating a political and social language that would later serve as a unifying factor for the formation of a revolutionary movement.

In 1737, Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson, the salon's founder and organizer, was born at the Carpenter House in Philadelphia on Chestnut Street between Sixth and Seventh Streets; the house was razed in 1826. She was the daughter of Dr. Thomas Graeme and Ann Diggs Graeme, who was the stepdaughter of Sir William Keith. Dr. Graeme, a physician by profession, was employed at Philadelphia's quarantine station where he checked incoming trade and passenger ships for disease. By working at the port, Graeme was materially involved in the emerging market economy and was intimate with, if not a part of, the rising class of merchants. Thus, Fergusson was reared in and around the culture of the new elite composed of "men and women of learning and conversational powers" who she later gathered into a "circle of choice spirits."[33]

Philadelphia's brightest intellectuals composed Fergusson's salon. The most prominent among them—Nathaniel Evans, Francis Hopkinson, and Jacob Duche—were students at the newly established College of Pennsylvania, where William Smith, the Provost and Anglican minister,

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[32]On republicanism, see Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins*, Gordon Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1969), J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), and Joyce Appleby, *Liberalism and Republicanism in the Historical Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992). On republican architecture, see Dell Upton, "Lancasterian Schools, Republican Citizenship, and the Spatial Imagination in Early Nineteenth-Century America," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* (September 1996).

[33]Anne Hollingsworth Wharton, *Salons Colnial And Republican* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1900) 13.

organized a traditional curriculum that consisted of both classical and theological emphases. Smith also established what some have called "America's first artistic coterie," sometimes known as the "Swains of the Schuylkill."[34] A structured organization, the Swains met and published their writings under the Smith's direction. Conversely, Fergusson's salon evolved in an unstructured and emancipated manner and Graeme Park became a place where several of the Swains went to develop their artistic inclinations. Furthermore, as the College of Pennsylvania did not admit women, Fergusson's salon drew a number of the male Swains on account of its mixed gender composition. The salon became the antithesis of a patriarchal establishment; Fergusson stood as "the social centerpiece of the group, drawing them together and presiding over them with unrivaled wit, charm, intelligence, and grace."[35]

Because such institutions as the College of Pennsylvania and the American Philosophical Society disallowed female attendance, the salon was Fergusson's only opportunity for educational and intellectual fellowship. One of the salon's most important benefits for its women members was that it gave them a venue for borrowing books.[36] An inventory taken at Graeme Park by the Revolutionary government in 1778—who planned to sell the household items after Fergusson was accused of treason against the American cause—indicated that she had in her possession one hundred and thirty books that were the "property of different Gentleman whose names are in them."[37] This collection of borrowed books and those that she owned included mostly religious tracts and classics. However, a number were of the literary genre which historian Bernard Bailyn describes as influences for "The Literature of Revolution;" writings that appeared in pamphlets written by Americans who supported the Revolution.[38] Her borrowed and purchased books included titles from classical Greek and Roman authors, English Whig ideologues, and Enlightened French philosophers.

Ten years after Fergusson's death, Dr. Benjamin Rush, a close defender and friend, wrote of Graeme Park:

> [It] was…consecrated to society and friendship. A plentiful table was spread daily for visitors, and two or three young ladies from

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[34]Edward M. Cifelli, "Elizabeth Graeme Ferguson and the Swains of the Schuylkill" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Northeast American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, October 1986) 1.

[35]Ibid., 2.

[36]Martha C. Slotten, "Elizabeth Graeme Ferguson A Poet In the Athens of North America" *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* (July 1984) 276.

[37]"Inventories of Property of Hugh and Elizabeth Fergusson, 1778," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 39 (1915): 295. (hereafter PMHB)

[38]See Bailyn, *Ideological Origins.*

> Philadelphia generally partook with Miss Graeme of the enjoyments which her situation in the country furnished.[39]

Rush continued:

> one while she instructed by the stores of knowledge contained in the historians, philosophers, and poets of ancient and modern nations, which she called forth at her pleasure; and again she charmed by a profusion of original ideas, collected by her vivid and widely expanded imagination, and combined with exquisite taste and judgment into an endless variety of elegant and delightful forms."[40]

Rush's eulogy for Fergusson revealed that Graeme Park was remembered as a place—a locality—where the dominant discourse emanated from her relaxed weekend intellectual salons, not the medical treatises of Dr. Graeme. Certainly, Dr. Graeme controlled the authoritative and political power over place, but intellectual power, according to Dr. Rush, was in control of Fergusson.

The "retreats" at Graeme Park were more than "a circle of friends" gathered together to share their most recent writings and to pursue artistic endeavors. These meetings were also forums for the development of republican thought, gatherings where Fergusson "charmed" (instructed) her guests through discussions about the divine nature of reason and virtue. Fergusson aspired to create "the Athens of North America" as illustrated in her quoting from Bishop Berkeley's "Verses on the prospect of planting Arts and Learning in America."[41] She relayed that "There shall be seen another golden age, The rise of Empires and of the arts, The good and great inspiring epic rage, The wisest heads, and noblest hearts."[42] At Graeme Park, Fergusson controlled intellectual power, creating a pedagogical realm where she could develop and forward her "original ideas."

Fergusson's ideology was, perhaps, best expressed in her poetry.[43] She understood that beyond Graeme Park men ruled and her poetry would be largely ignored. "It is the noble Lordly Creature Man, whose heart must glow, & Head toil for his country for you know some Author says A Woman's glory is to shine unknown."[44] Despite the difficulties, however,

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[39]Benjamin Rush, "An Account of the Life and Character of Mrs. Elizabeth Ferguson," *The Portfolio,* 3rd Series, 1 (1809) 521.

[40]Ibid., 528.

[41]Ferguson Commonplace Book, 1796, Society Collection, HSP.

[42]Ibid.

[43]Ferguson usually used *noms de plume* to sign her poetry: Laura, Fawnia, or the Wood Nymph of Graeme.

[44]As quoted in *Milcah Martha Moore's Book,* ed. Karin A. Wulf (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997) 206 (hereafter MMM).

she did succeed in having her work published. A varied assortment of Philadelphia newspapers and journals including the *Columbian Magazine* and the *Pennsylvania Magazine* ultimately published twenty-seven of her poems. Notably, several copies of her translation of Fenelon's epic, *Telemacus*, and her metrical version of Psalms were also made implying that her work was respected among a broader Philadelphian audience.[45]

Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson and the Construction and Maintenance of Graeme Park's Various Landscapes

Fergusson infused all aspects of life at Graeme Park with republican sensibility—farm production included. Based on tax records and written accounts it appears that more than a for-profit enterprise, the farm at Graeme Park centered on experimental cultivation which was both aesthetically pleasing and subsistence-oriented. In a letter written by Dr. Graeme to Thomas Penn, Graeme noted that the "park is managed in a manner quite different than any I have seen here or elsewhere." In commenting that the farm was managed in a manner distinct from which he was accustomed, Graeme infers that the design and operation of the farm and ornamental landscape were not within his sphere of influence:

> I have Endeavored to make a fine Plantation, in regard to fields, meadows and Inclosures, not much yet regarding the House and Gardens. I have a Park which Incloses 300 acres of land, this park is managed in a manner quite different from any I have seen here or elsewhere, its very good soil, and one half of it lys with an easy descent to the south sun, which besides avenues and Vistas thro' it, there is now but just done a 150 acres of it quite clear of Shrubbs Grubbs and Bushes, nothing but the Tall trees and good sapling timber standing,…it would be one of the finest Parks for Deer that well could be imagined, but tho' I have double ditched and double hedged it, I'm afraid it is not secure enough against Deers escaping. On the other hand, if you consider it as a piece __ of Beauty and Ornament to a dwelling, I dare venture to say that no nobleman in England but would be proud to have it on his seat or by his house.[46]

Although, Elizabeth Graeme was only eighteen years old at the time of the letter, she had already been writing pastoral-themed poems for several years and by this time had formed her salon. In 1753, William Franklin composed "A Song By A Young Gentleman To Some Ladies In The County At Horsham" for Fergusson whose verses included "Ye ladies who are now retired to groves and __rling springs nor think the conquest you have made forgot by absence quite nor all the witty things you said are lost clear out of sight." Franklin's poem described a retreat similar to Elizabeth's salon where "witty things" were "said" among the "groves"

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[45]See *MMM,* 268-269 and "A Blue-Stocking of Old Philadelphia," (paper presented at the Annual Report of the Library Company of Philadelphia for the Year 1962, 1963) 45.

[46]Thomas Graeme to John Penn, 1755, HSP.

and "springs" of Graeme Park. Furthermore, Franklin implied that she had been at Graeme Park for some time and could easily have been influential in the renovation of the estate's landscape occurring in the 1750s and 1760s. It is probable that Elizabeth Graeme, at the very least, assisted in planning the Graeme Park's gardens and plantings; through this probable influence, she oversaw the creation of physical space and alteration to the natural landscape which paralleled the salon's discourses on nature and their other artistic activities.

Fergusson adhered to the republican notion that self-sufficient and self-sacrificing farmers were especially capable of virtuous citizenship. Liberty and personal sovereignty could be achieved through taming and cultivating the wilderness and thusly creating autonomous realms for individual power. In an early nineteenth-century historical landscape painting by an unknown artist, Graeme Park was portrayed as an idealized landscape of the "noble farmer" with the mansion house standing in the center of a pastoral landscape complete with outbuildings surrounded by individuals engaged in various chores. Of particular interest, five of the six figures depicted in the painting are women; all six humans are engaged in the same activity—hay baling—regardless of gender. In a mid-1760s poem entitled "Character of a Virtuous Woman," Fergusson described her attitude regarding a women's role in agricultural pursuits: "she views a meadow and she buys a field then plants a vineyard that fair fruit may yield."[47] In 1768, Fergusson wrote another poem that more broadly elucidated her theories about the noble farmer:

> no false refinements constitute his __ no __ __ elegance his substance waste But God and Nature are his sacred guides and reason torch a steady light provides a noble liberty his spirit proves a generous freedom all his actions moves now independence is the rural plan now his own master is the rustic man.[48]

Based on evidence in her verses as well as the female dominated landscape painting, it is clear that Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson was not a passive resident at Graeme Park, but rather was an active and integral force in the direction of its day to day household and farming activities and the shape of its overall landscape. This claim is further supported in a 1773 letter which discussed the harvesting of the estate's crops. Fergusson commented, "I intend to be at the expense of harvesting it my Self; as I am told by my neighbors it will be a great loss to sell it on the Ground."[49] With regard to finances and living quarters for farm workers she stated, "All is now paid off: And I have not receivd But three hundred and 27 pounds Cash" and "I keep no family at the long house at all: I have

[47]Ferguson Commonplace Book, "Poemata Juvenilia," Library Company of Philadelphia.
[48]Ibid.
[49]Elizabeth Graeme Ferguson to Richard Peters, 1773, Society Collections, HSP.

got All my people into their quarters over here."[50] These statements highlight an amazing and rare example of a colonial American woman's power over place. Although by this time she was married to Henry Hugh Fergusson, it appears that Elizabeth, and not her husband, directed the farming, finances, and living arrangements at the estate.

The Mansion House's Graeme-Era Transformation

In addition to power over place, Fergusson might have had some influence over the architectural renovations made to the "mansion house" between 1755 and 1764. In 1787, under financial duress, Elizabeth placed an ad for the sale of Graeme Park. Although she did not sell it for another five years, this ad is vital to the establishing the estate's history as it provides the only description of the fully improved plantation.

> To be sold....550 acres of land of an excellent quality, near 200 acres of which is beautiful timberland, about 40 acres of meadow, a considerable part watered by a never failing stream, the remainder plough land of a rich and kindly soil, producing plenty of pasture, and good crops of all kinds of grain,...There are on the premises, an elegant strong built and well finished mansion house of stone, three stories high; 60 feet front, and 27 deep, with a good cellar under it, three parlours on the first floor, the story near 13 feet high; three bed chambers on the second story, and three on the third; one of the parlours on the first floor is 23 feet by 22, wainscotted to the ceiling and paneled, the bed chamber over it of the same size; a fireplace in every room in each story; the chimnies draw smoke remarkably well, and none of them corner chimnies. A garden containing two acres adjoining the mansion house, enclosed by a terrace and a stone walls, a large frame barn, covered with cedar shingles, with plenty of stabling adjoining it, a stone cow-house, carthouse, smoke house, poultry house, and a great number of other necessary outhouses; also a good stone kitchen near the mansion house, with convenient rooms adjoining it for a house-keeper and servants, a good well of water at the kitchen door, with a pump by it, remarkable fine spring of water in the dairy. There are likewise on said premises two large orchards of the best kinds of grafted fruit, and many other conveniences too tedious to enumerate.[51]

While improvements to the overall Graeme Park landscape probably continued after Thomas Graeme's 1772 death, the retrofitting of the mansion house was completed sometime between 1755 and 1764.

As the renovations to the dwelling took place in the nine-year period between 1755 and 1764, then they roughly coincide with the establishment and growth of Fergusson's salon. Thus, with a variety of elite intellectuals present at Graeme Park during its period of high-style overhaul, it is possible that Fergusson and the others may have had some influence over choices made in finishing the interior rooms and altering the landscape

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[50] Ibid.
[51] Ad for the sale of Graeme Park, *Pennsylvania Packet,* 29 Aug. 1787.

around the house. While not unusual among the highly educated elites, Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson was well-acquainted with current architectural trends and allusions to architecture were common in her own writings. For example, one of her poems referenced famed Roman architect Vitruvius and indicates her familiarity with his *Ten Books of Architecture*. "When lofty homes and palaces I saw, Vitruvius pencil did their finish draw the proportions to the __ stone and made the charms of architect his own."[52] In addition to her own musings, some of Fergusson's salon companions drew explicit connections between forms of expressive media in developing ideals regarding virtue. In a 1774 political treatise, Francis Hopkinson describes the interrelated nature of buildings and texts:

> A book is like a house: The grand Portico is the Dedication; the flagged pavement is an humble Address to the Reader, in Order to pave the Way for a kind Reception of the Work; the Front Door with its fluted Pillars, Pediment, Trigliffs and Modillions are the Title Page with its Motto, Author's Name and Titles, Date of the Year, &c. The entry is the Preface (oftentimes of a tedious Length) and the several Apartments and Closets are the Chapters and Sections of the Work itself.[53]

For Fergusson and her contemporaries, literature and architecture, along with the other arts and music became the media for expressing their favored ideologies. Given this proclivity for abstract thinking about architecture, it does not take a stretch of the imagination to postulate that Fergusson and her coterie at least voiced opinions regarding the changes to house and landscape.

A more tangible example of Fergusson's possible influence over the renovations made to Graeme Park appeared in a September 1763 letter to Fergusson from her father. The letter was sent from Philadelphia to Graeme Park and, from the language used in the text, it appears that Graeme made frequent and at times lengthy trips away from the estate. Thus, Fergusson spent much of her time at Graeme Park without any paternal presence or supervision. In his missive Graeme wrote:

> I hear your cider-mill is brought into good order, notwithstanding which it will be time enough to begin cider-making the weeks after next. We have next our second hay to get made. I have pressed Henry White to see that Roberts gets the shed ready to put the apples in, which will be a great convenience in carrying on your manufacture. It is still uncertain whether I shall come the latter end of next week or not; it would suit me better one week longer.[54]

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[52]"Poemata."

[53]Francis Hokinson, *Comical Spirit of Seventy-Six: The Humor of Francis Hopkinson,* ed. Paul M. Zall (California: The Huntington Library, 1976) 35.

[54]As quoted in *History of Montgomery County,* ed. Theodore Bean (Philadelphia: Everts & Peck, 1884) 889.

The letter suggests that in addition to her control over the everyday workings of the farm, Fergusson may well have been involved with the design and construction process of supporting agricultural buildings, in this case a cider mill. Evidence for her possible involvement with construction of and alterations to the estate's buildings and landscape are further evident in a diary entry in which she fantasizes about designing her own landscape later in life. "The Article of Climate I will give up, we must supply the Deficiencies of that by Contrivance, but then Fortune must be favourable to furnish a warm good House in the Winter, & airy pretty Gardens in the Summer."[55]

Evidence of a great interest in the built environment is well-documented in her diary from a trip to England in 1764–1765. In the entries, Fergusson described both the exterior and interior of the buildings she visited. Her most detailed entries, however, dealt not so much with structures alone but rather how buildings interacted with their surrounding planned landscapes and contrived gardens. While visiting a private residence in Essex, Fergusson described the interdependency of house and garden:

> The House opens into the Garden which has on each side of a large gravel Walk, fine old high Hedges, that give a pleasing Solemnity to the Place & when you arrived at the Foot of the Garden, the House at the end of the Walk is a pretty Object, being white, to terminate the eye at the end of the Vista; the garden takes in 5 acres, has large green Walks & a fine Stream of Water, it is not perhaps, what would be called here a fine Garden, but it is so full of flowering Shrubs, Variety of Hedges, & so agreeably diversified, that I think it a pleasing Spot.[56]

Her journal is filled with similar descriptive narratives depicting the relation between house and garden. Shortly before her return to America, Fergusson summed up her impressions of England's landscape with this declaration:

> Seeing fine Garden in the Spring & Summer, ever was ranked among my capital Pleasures, it seems to be of that innocent Nature as occasions no Checks nor Reflections of a painful Kind Upon the Recollection, & enliven it,—it leads us to be thankful to the great Author of Nature, each one addressing him, under the Title of Jehovah, Jove or Lord.[57]

While in England, Fergusson was "sought and was sought for, by the most respectable literary gentlemen who flourished in England" and clearly

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[55]MMM, 206.
[56]Ibid., 204.
[57]Ibid., 209.

enjoyed seeing many fine examples of Georgian architecture and landscape design, however by late in 1765 she became restless for her salon and her own controlled natural landscape at Graeme Park.[58] She wrote:

> I am convinced many Hour of insipid Langour posses the Mind that would wish to be thought happy, this you & I have often talked over as we sat at the Door of Graeme Park, strolled on the Terrass or watched the Moon that friend to Contemplation, how happy we have been there, & how happy may we be again.[59]

Her yearning for the comfortable landscape of Graeme Park is further stressed in a poem written from England to discourage her being sent abroad again.

> I wish to lead a calm & tranquil Life Distant from Bustle & noisy Strife Action & Exercise the world admire, And call that best their Souls do most desire No rich dress's Viands shall my Health con-found Nori in strain'd Passions be my senses drown's Nor early would I meet the Dawn While Dew drops glitter on the verdant Lawn; A moon light walk indulge me on the Green, Or when the Sun makes ev'ry Shadow seen In forms gigantick, let me stroll along, To hear the Mock-bird chaunt his rural Song But when rough winter with his Iron Hand, Collects round crackling Fires a social Band; I sit by that dear Pair unknown to you whose Souls can feel Virtue all that's due Let me remain nor rove abroad nor stray Where Snows & Frosts point out the slipp'pry way. The Book, the Work, the Pen can all employ The vacant Moment to some peaceful Joy."[60]

With Fergusson's interest in architecture, landscape, and design established—to a degree beyond which most educated men and women would not cultivate—it is probable that she, and possibly her colleagues, made extensive contribution to the design of buildings and landscapes at Graeme Park.

Fergusson conceived of Graeme Park as a setting for her salon and its associated theoretical debated and practical application of republican virtue. The salon discourse was based on a complex combination of Christian, classical, Whig, and Enlightenment modes of thought. The intent was to create a virtuous and reason-centered environment where the political and social coexisted with and glorified God's natural world. In practice, the salon at Graeme Park was a democratic institution with an enlightened *female* leader, a place where ideas were shared in an open and relaxed forum. The subsistence ideal of Fergusson's progressive farm production realized the republican ideal of the theoretical noble farmer.

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[58]Rush, *Portfolio*, 552.
[59]MMM, 204.
[60]"Poemata."

Her influence over the ornamental parkland clearly displayed her interests in up-to-date landscape design and horticulture. As architecture was an important theoretical theme for the salon and the salon convened during the proposed period of alterations, it is probable that she and her colleagues and friends, who were members of the salon, provided opinions, if not actual assistance in renovating the mansion house. For Fergusson, Graeme Park's total setting—the intellectual salon meeting within a high-style house set in a contrived rural working and pleasure landscapes—was the ultimate intellectual environment for dwelling on virtuous theory and participating in activities in which that theory was physically manifested; better even, than the refined society and cultivated spaces she encountered in England.

Graeme Park as the Site of Personal Enlightenment

In addition to the quasi-public function of Graeme Park as site of a popular intellectual salon and a working agricultural enterprise, Fergusson also viewed the estate as private space for her own personal enlightenment. Recollections of Fergusson's private world at Graeme Park—as expressed by those who were part of Graeme Park's living culture—began during her own lifetime and continued into the twentieth century. An early memory of the private relationship between Fergusson and the estate was expressed in a 1775 letter to her from John Young.

> You have all the advantages that any poet can wish for; for the season of poetry is fast approaching, and everything about you must contribute to inspire it: so that you have nothing to do but to invoke the muses and begin (to) sing. As for the scene I'm sure Graeme Park may vie with Arcadia; for poetry many easily convert Neshaminy into Helcion, the Meadows into Tempe, & the N. Park into Parnassus…[61]

Dr. Benjamin Rush's 1809 eulogy for Fergusson also depicted Graeme Park as a site of Fergusson's intellectual growth. Rush described Graeme Park as a place that "afforded her the most delightful opportunities for study, meditation, rural walks, and pleasures, and, above all, for cultivating a talent for poetry."[62] Fergusson's belief that the natural landscape was the ideal setting for enlightened thought had a profound effect upon the memory of those who were culturally connected to Graeme Park. Margaret Strawbridge, the last person to privately own Graeme Park, recalled in 1989 that "in my day, we only knew that Lady Elizabeth Fergusson was the last one to live in the old house," and that "she sat under that catalpa tree,…[63] The fact that Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson was remembered as a fixture in the landscape almost two-

[61]John Young to Elizabeth Ferguson, 22 March 1775, Society Collection, HSP.
[62]Rush, *Potfolio,* 521.
[63]Margaret Strawbridge interview, Graeme Park, Jul.–Aug. 1989.

hundred years after her death reveals the heavy imprint that Fergusson's theory of the natural landscape as a virtuous space left on the culture of memory surrounding Graeme Park.

Although some of her poetry was intended for public reception, the real-life experiences upon which she drew her context were intensely personal. As early as the 1750s, Fergusson transformed the rural landscape of Graeme Park into her own personal classroom. The garden as an environment for learning was undoubtedly a notion discovered within her close reading of the classics. Throughout her writings, Fergusson adopted the pastoral allusions of classical authors and turned the meadows and streams of eastern Pennsylvania into "Parnassus," "Tempe," and "Helcion." This use of pastoral metaphor applied to actual landscapes bears the particular influential stamp of the Roman author Virgil; Virgil's *The Art of Husbandry* appears in the 1778 estate inventory. According to the scholar David Shields, "Virgilian georic" became vastly popular in eighteenth-century America; as a literary device, "it portrayed American landscape as temporal, dynamic, vital, wearing several aspects in an unsteady progress from wilderness to cultivation."[64] In a poem entitled "The Invitation," Fergusson reflects in a Virgilian mode:

> the town in all its sprightly charms was not ordained for me more lasting happiness is found beneath a spreading tree here sweet symphony provides and glads the virtuous heart and rural elegance all around does natures toys impart….Each shrub conveys some virtuous truth and earthly bliss defines…[65]

For Fergusson, Graeme Park was a material place of classical and contemporary virtue where she attempted to reconcile the dialectic of creation between nature and man. Fergusson believed that nature, although violent at times, was based on reason and that it was—by constitution—virtuous. Thus, humans could achieve the same virtuous characteristics by living in and learning from nature. In both "Ode to Summer" and "Ode to Autumn," Fergusson described how each season created a new physical environment that offered a unique setting for learning:

> Come, Summer, offspring of the sun! Descend from yonder turf-top'd hill! Soft as when falling waters run Adown the pure, meandering rill, Rich as the noon of manhood's prime' Mild as the breath of May, in gales Luxuriant as when infant Time First play'd in young Arcadian vales! O place me in some moss-grown cave, Where oozing, creeping waters flow! There may their humid windings lave In pensive murmurs soft and slow. These holy haunts

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[64]David Shields, "Reading the Landscape," *Everyday Life In the Early Republic,* ed. Catherine E. Hutchins (Delaware: Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1994) 120.

[65]"Poemata."

> my soul shall sooth; The 'still small voice of heaven is here;' That voice shall passion's throbbing smooth And raise the heart-delighting tear.[66]
>
> See bounteous Autumn pours his goods In rich profusion round! What various tinges dye the woods! What plenty decks the ground! The dulcet apple's sprightly juice, The purple laden's vine, With joint consent their wealth produce, In crowning clusters twine. The bursting barns with Ceres' grains, Unlock their golden stores, Reaped from the mellow, fertile plains, Where earth her treasure pours. Each favor sent is but a hint To raise the sluggish mind; Since heaven does not its bounties stint, Shall mortals prove unkind?[67]

In her 1769 poem entitled "Content in a Cottage," Fergusson described the intellectual superiority that "her humble cottage" in the "vernal woods" offered, as opposed to city life where "virtue is lost in the words of learned men."

> The scenes of rural bliss an humble poet sings the Shepard happy wish that mild contentment brings our vernal woods and groves a source of pleasure yield while soft delightful loves enliven every field Tho science does not reign beneath the rustic bower the shep-erd simple strain beguiles the gliding hour the little good for boast is daily practiced then and virtue is not lost in words by learned men. Health virtue and content the triple union join and smile with fond consent a lovely wreath to __ by them the garland's plac'd upon the rural shed tho humble cottage graced with what from courts __"[68]

Fergusson constructed her private world at Graeme Park as an "enchanted ground" where nature's virtue could be both an inspiration for personal enlightenment and as an appropriate subject for her poetry.[69] Through imbedding intense meaning into the landscape and life of Graeme Park, Fergusson reveals the life encompassing capacity of her personal ideologies. Finally, Fergusson clearly enjoyed the relaxation and healthfulness offered by the rural "bower" of Graeme Park and used words like "contentment," "peace," and "cheerfulness," to describe her time spent in the estate's natural landscape.

<u>Contradictions in the Republican Virtue Cultivated at Graeme Park</u>
Although Fergusson was committed to virtue, reason, and personal sovereignty, her life was not without contradictions. The most obvious contradiction was that she owned slaves. Slavery had always had a presence at Graeme Park beginning with Governor Keith, who at one time

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[66]Bean, *History of Montgomery County,* 363.

[67]"John J. Loeper, ed., *Elizabeth Graeme Ferguson of Graeme Ferguson "A Colonial Poetess"* (Pennsylvania: Hatborough Historical Society, 1974).

[68]"Poemata."

[69]Ferguson Commonplace Book, 1789, Graeme Park Archives, Horsham, Pennsylvania.

kept thirteen slaves there. It appears that Fergusson inherited her slaves as opposed to buying them, and by 1777, there was only one slave listed in the tax books. Some believe that it was Dr. Benjamin Rush, an abolitionist in the latter part of his life, who encouraged Fergusson to free her slaves.

Another inconsistency in Fergusson's life was her being labeled a traitor to the American cause in the most republican of all events—the American Revolution. From the time of her birth, Fergusson allied herself with those would become leaders during the Revolutionary decades. In fact, at the moment of the passage of the American Stamp Act she was told by her chaperon in England, "Betsy, you were yesterday made a slave of."[70] At least two members of her salon, Dr. Benjamin Rush and Francis Hopkinson, both signed the Declaration of Independence and served in the Continental Congress.

In 1772, Elizabeth married Henry Hugh Fergusson after which he became active in public life in the vicinity of Graeme Park. He returned to England in 1775 as a show of loyalty for the king and only returned to the region after the British took Philadelphia in September 1777.[71] Elizabeth received passes from the Americans to visit her husband and "through him she became involved in some questionable affairs, most notably the surreptitious peace proposal of Reverend Jacob Duche…which Elizabeth carried to the American forces."[72] These "un-republican" activities and her loyalist husband's permanent departure for England when the Americans retook Philadelphia tarnished Fergusson's reputation and threatened her economic well-being; ultimately, she lost most of the family furnishings, fortune, and quite nearly Graeme Park. If not for her influential friends who attested to her commitment to the ideology of the American Revolution—as well as the legal situation whereby the estate of Graeme Park was willed to her, she had had no children, and that her husband was not an "American" at the time of the Declaration of Independence—she would have experienced full financial ruin.[73]

Graeme Park's Sale Out of the Graeme Family

The exigencies of the wartime economy clearly had its effect even on the most affluent of American society. Elizabeth Fergusson's petition to the Pennsylvania General Assembly of February 20, 1781 regarding whether the estate would be entirely confiscated and sold noted that "a variety of causes have contributed to bring the estate into great want of repairs in

[70]Commonplace Book, 1796, HSP.
[71]PMHB, 306.
[72]Ibid.
[73]PMHB, 307.

almost every part."[74] Fergusson's protracted legal entanglement surrounding the estate clearly curtailed the execution of any repairs after the cessation of open conflict. William Rawle's 1786 diary entry does portray an unkempt and unproductive landscape at Graeme Park.

> There was some residue of expence (sic), and amplitude about Graeme Park which gave me however no sensations of veneration or pity…The house & 550 acres of land around it, now preserves the ostentatious title of Graeme Park–tho' it never was a park. Lady Keith's trustees sold it to Doctor Graeme, who repaired and beautified the house which is indeed internally very elegant, and neglected the farm…The mansion house stands low & inelegantly–commands no views either naturally or artificially beautiful. The front, after passing over a ruined garden is stopped by the large stone buildings erected by Sr. W. K. for distilleries …being now neither comfortable nor venerable–neither in good order nor agreeably ruinous–are altogether nuisances to the effect…The eye on the left side is entangled with the highway, & on the right, stretched upon a long, lifeless, level field–without swells, without clumps, without water, without distant hills.[75]

Thus, while some admiration was given to the interior Georgian retrofitting during the elder Graeme's tenancy—with no comment on its state of upkeep—the surrounding ornamental and productive landscape, previously of great interest to Fergusson, had fallen into disrepair and was clearly disparaged.

After attempting a variety of different sales schemes in which she retained portions of the estate, in 1791, Fergusson sold the entirety of Graeme Park to Dr. William Smith.[76] She remained at Graeme Park until 1797 at which time her health had deteriorated to the point where she could no longer care for herself. In 1801, under "great and protracted pain," Fergusson died and was interred with her parents in the enclosed graveyard of Christ Church, Philadelphia.[77] In the decades after her death, many aspects of her life-structuring ideologies faded in American society as virtuous republicanism was engulfed by the staggering changes under the market revolution. Fergusson modeled both the public and private space of Graeme Park on republican notions of virtue. Publicly, Graeme Park was a setting where the ideological architects of the American Revolution developed a vernacular version of classical republicanism. Her farm became a working manifestation of the "noble farmer" ideal and the site of

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[74]"The Petition of Elizabeth Fergusson (sic) of Graeme Park in the County of Philadelphia, 20 February 1781," in PMHB, 307.

[75]William Rawle diary, 23 Aug. 1786, in HSR, 41–42.

[76]It is possible that the Dr. William Smith who bought Graeme Park was the same William Smith who was provost of the College of Pennsylvania; the College of Pennsylvania was known as the University of Pennsylvania after 1787.

[77]Rush, *Portfolio,* 526.

contemporary trends and theories regarding the contrived natural landscape; the land was developed both for practical production as well as aesthetic enjoyment. Privately, Graeme Park was for Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson an enchanted place of personal reflection, prayer, meditation, and learning; a locale where God's natural world inspired and taught the divine attributes of virtue and reason. Her influence on the physical and mental construction of place resulted in an enduring culture of virtuous space—a tangible sign of the past—experienced by those who wandered Graeme Park's groves and meadows long after Fergusson departed. In the final years of her life, Fergusson became skeptical about the ability of government to cultivate a virtuous citizenry, but she never lost faith in the republican ideal:

> Tho' the great deem us little, and do us despise, Let them know it is wise to make little suffice, In this we will teach them, altho they are great, It is always true wisdom to bend to our fate; For tho King or Congress should carry the day, We farmers and spinners at least must obey. Then let our wheels and reels go merily round, While health, peace and virtue among us are found.[78]

PART II: ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The mansion house at Graeme Park is a two-story sandstone structure with a full third story contained under a gambrel roof with stone gable walls. The roof is pierced near the ridgeline by two unaligned T-shaped chimneys. The building's original conception as a utilitarian structure dictated its eventual form as a long single-cell deep plan arranged around an entry/stairhall accessed by a near-center exterior door on the north (garden) façade. Conscious efforts to provide balance, if not symmetry, on the north façade and high-quality woodwork in a number of interior rooms underscore the mid-eighteenth century transformation of utilitarian Fountain Low into Graeme Park—a fashionable country retreat.

2. Condition of fabric: The house has been repaired and restored and is in excellent condition. The only noticeable discrepancy in the building's condition is poor-quality repointing of exterior masonry and some sloppy painting on the restored interior carpentry.

B. Description of Exterior:

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[78]Loeper, *A Colonial Poetess.*

1. Overall Dimensions: Approximately 56' x 25'. The ridgeline of the gambrel rises 35'-2" upward from the ground and the chimneys extend another 7'-11" for an overall height of 43'-1".

2. Foundations: The foundations are of stone.

3. Walls: The walls are composed of red sandstone.

   North Elevation: The most formal of the four exterior walls, the rough-cut sandstone is neatly coursed on this façade. There is a low water table and the first and second floors are divided by continuous horizontal band of large stones. This wall's general coursing is composed of stones with varying dimensions, each row being made up of stones with a uniform size. The corners are quoined with alternating large and small stones. The wall is divided into six bays, and while not symmetrical, the vertically aligned openings are grouped to provide balance. Segmental stone arches top the first-floor door and window openings. Four dormer windows extend from the gambrel roof and do not purposefully correspond with the lower bay arrangement.

   On the north façade there are three sets of initials. The sets on the east and west ends of the wall are located between the second floor windows and the stone quoining at the building's corners. The middle set is west of the central second-story window. The initials have been generally accepted of being those of stone masons as it was a common period practice, though they are most often concealed on hidden interior surfaces.

   The south, east and west facades are all of rubble coursed sandstone; a water table is present around the entire dwelling perimeter. The south façade is organized into five bays. A single dormer not corresponding to the bay system below extends from the roof on the third story. A relocated ground level hatch accesses the cellar at the base of the south wall. The west elevation originally contained a pair of windows on the first and second stories, one of these has been filled on the second story. A single window is centered in the gable on the third floor. Like the north side, shallow segmental arches articulate the five openings. The east elevation contains a pair of windows on the first floor and a centralized window on the third floor. An interesting feature is large segmental arch extending between the two first-floor windows—its presence has been debated.

3. Structural system, framing: The house is of load-bearing masonry walls with straight sawn oak joists let into the stone wall and resting on a timber plate. The comprehensive nature of the framing throughout the house elicits the conclusion that it all occurred during period one construction

(1722–1738). On the first floor, the joists were replaced in 1958 and are no longer let into the wall, rather, they rest on posts sunk into the ground below the house.[79] The rafters are of pit-sawn lumber and mortise-and-tenon construction; they are marked with Roman numerals.

4. Stoops: On the house's north side, there are three three-sided steps leading up to the entrance door. The risers are roughly 7" high and the treads are 13" wide. Early twentieth-century photographs show the top step approximately 1'-8" wider than at present. There is a single stone slab servicing the near-center door on the southern façade.

5. Chimneys: There are two interior T-shaped chimneys. One stack is about 17'-0" from the west wall and the other is about 24'-0" from the east wall. The two chimneys are not centered in regard to the building's footprint, nor are they aligned with each other. The stacks are composed of brick and house four flues each. The outer faces of the two chimneys are embellished with blind arches and the chimney caps are corbeled. Slightly above the roof plane, an ornamental brick band—with a straight course on the north and south sides and a diagonally sloping row of headers on the east and west sides—articulates the chimney. The row of headers are positioned in such a way that it seems plausible the original roof was a more simple two-plane end gable type than the current gambrel. Another hypothesis looks to the brick coursing on the chimney stacks as decorative additions from the Graeme era.[80]

6. Openings:

    a. Doorways and doors: The mansion house has three exterior doors. Two of the exterior doors are on the south façade and one is on the north. A ground-level hatch and door accesses the cellar on the south side. None of the doors are centered, but the eastern door on the south façade, and the one door on the northern façade are both about 3'-0" off center. These doors are aligned with one another as well as with an interior door separating the entry/stairhall from the office—thus creating the illusion of a through passage common to Georgian-plan houses. A standard-sized door in the parlor's north wall was closed-up in order to maintain interior symmetry in the room. A second relieving arch in the east foundation below the enclosed door on the eastern façade indicates the position of the original cellar door.

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[79]HSR, 67.
[80]Regarding the roof structure, see HSR, 99-107.

The two doorways on the south side are topped by transoms containing two rows of four lights each. In a ca. 1850s photograph, the off-center door on the south appears to have window sash nailed over the transom opening. On the northern façade, the off-center door is topped by a transom with a single row of four lights below a lintel and relieving arch. This door is hinged at the center and folds in half when opened in order to maintain ease of circulation in the narrow entry/stairhall. The three principal doorways are six-paneled and have wooden thresholds.

b. Windows: Except for one, all of the exterior windows on the first and second stories, save one, are nine-over-nine double hung sash. The eastern-most first-floor window on the north side contains a single fixed sash with twenty-four lights. This functionless window is covered-over on the interior by paneling, thus maintaining a strict symmetrical arrangement for the parlor's interior finish. The third-floor dormer on the south side contains six-over-six double hung sash; the four northern dormers all contain six-over-nine double hung sash.

A blocked up window is evident on the second story of the west façade.

7. Roof:

a. Shape, covering: The gambrel roof is covered with wood shingles. This sheathing is composed of 1'-0" wide boards. Lightning rods are present on the chimneys and at the gable ends of the roof's ridgeline. A hatch allows access from a third-floor stairway up to the roof.

b. Cornice, eaves: 10" eaves extend beyond the wall plane in the gable ends. Wood cornices on both the north and south facades were installed during one of the mid-twentieth-century renovations.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

a. Cellar: A cellar exists on the eastern side of the house directly under the parlor. A crawl space, not part of the initial construction, extends under the rest of the house. There are four windows in the cellar and one door—all contained in hatches. Two windows are cut into the north wall, one on the east in the space originally housing the cellar door, and another in the south wall. The west wall contains a

relieving arch for one of the chimneys. Eleven posts extend from the gravel floor and support beams carrying the first floor joists; these posts were introduced in 1969. The walls are plastered, however the plaster is in a state of decay and is falling from the stone.

b. First floor: The house is essentially a single cell deep and three rooms across—all arranged around an entry/stairhall on the north side. This narrow entry/stairhall provides buffered access to the three first-floor rooms—the parlor, office, and dining room—as well as the upper rooms. The alignment of the off-center north and south exterior doors with an interior door between the entry and the office suggest a path of through circulation and cross-ventilation not unlike contemporary houses with full central passages.

   South of the entry/stairhall is an office heated by a fireplace centered on the west wall. A door south of the fireplace opens onto the dining room. The dining room extends the full width of the first floor's western side. An off-center fireplace on the east wall backs up to that in the office and shares the chimney stack. Based on paint analysis completed in 1984, the fireplace opening in this room was once quite large, indicating a utilitarian function in the building's original conception or in an early alteration. The room has direct exterior access on the south, a door convenient to the location of the external kitchen.

   Filling more than 1/3 of the first-floor plan and located on the easternmost portion of the dwelling is the near-square parlor. This formally conceived and high-style room has a single point of access from the entry/stairhall.

c. Second floor: The second floor has essentially the same single cell deep arrangement as the first floor—three rooms arranged around a central stairhall abutting the north exterior wall. The stairhall is a bit wider—at the expense of the room over the office—as it has to accommodate stairs running both up and down. The western chamber contains slightly more usable space as the chimney stack thins-out at this level. Each of the second floor rooms has a single point of access from the stairhall and no communicating doors between rooms; all three rooms contain fireplaces.

   A second highly-finished room fills roughly the same squarish easternmost space as the parlor below. While the detailing along the fireplace (western) wall is not so rigidly symmetrical as on the first floor, a similar result is effected.

d. Third floor: The third floor plan closely resembles the two lower stories. Major circulation patterns are again centered on the stairhall on the north wall, with a small heated room directly to the south and a large heated room filling the story's eastern third. The western room has been divided into two spaces. All of the chambers on this story are lit by at least one window.

e. Attic: The attic is an open crawlspace extending across the structure above the third floor ceiling plaster; it is unfinished and not floored. It is accessed by the same steep stairs leading up to the roof hatch.

2. Stairways: The closed stringer scissors stair ascends from the right side of the entry/stairhall and constitutes a continuous run to the third floor. From the first to the second floor, there twenty risers with a full landing. From the second to the third floor, there are eighteen risers with a bi-level landing. The handrails are attached to the squared newel posts with pegs; these posts are located at the start and termination of each run of stairs. Two pairs of adjacent newel posts are fashioned from a single piece of wood. Some of the posts extend below the stair undercarriage and terminate in small, decorative pendants. Balustrade is filled with thin balusters which have turned shafts and squared tops and bottoms.

   The steeply pitched attic stairway bears a likeness more akin to a closed ladder than a staircase. It is enclosed with a beaded board partition and accessed by a battened door

   The extant stairs providing access from the first to the third floors date from the Graeme-era renovations. Discernible evidence in the house belies the location and form of the original Keith-era winder stair in roughly the same location. Infill floorboards on the second and third floors indicate the location and remnants of the staircase framing exists under the current floor.

3. Flooring: The main story floor boards have been periodically replaced. The present flooring largely dates from the Penrose-era and includes salvaged barn boards from unneeded Keith and Graeme-era outbuildings as well as commercial circular-saw cut lumber from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[81] Archaeology indicates that the floor for the western 2/3 of the first floor may have originally been of masonry on a grade 8" lower than the present wood floors.

   The flooring on the second and third stories is mostly of tongue-and-groove yellow pine planks dating from the Keith and/or Graeme eras.

[81]HSR, 109-110; John Witthoff, Report, 20 July 1964, Graeme Park archives.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: All of the interior walls, save portions that are paneled, are covered in plaster that was applied directly to the stone surface; the interior partition walls are lathed and plastered. Some of the plaster, for example that in the attic, dates from twentieth-century renovations. All of the house's ceilings are likewise plastered.

   First floor: The parlor is fully paneled on all four walls. The upper portions are articulated with recessed panels and the lower portions are composed of smoothly-finished vertical and horizontal boarding set flush. The upper and lower portions of the walls are divided by a bold chair rail that aligns with and incorporates the end of the window sills. The only paneling in the office, which may date to the twentieth century, is a large panel above the fireplace. The extruded portion of the dining room's east wall around the fireplace is fully paneled. A chair rail runs around at sill level. Both the paneling and chair rail are painted red.

   Second floor: The eastern and western walls of the large eastern chamber are fully paneled with large recessed panels above and aligned smaller ones below. On this chamber's north and south walls, recessed panels are located below the windows between the baseboard and the sills. The room contains no chair rail. The middle chamber's extruded fireplace on the west wall is fully paneled as is the western chamber's fireplace wall.

   Third floor: In the eastern chamber, the wall containing a closet to the north of the fireplace is paneled.

   There are four different types of baseboards used throughout the house: the simplest is a plain board; two others have moderately decorative profiles; and the most decorative incorporates an ogee topped with an astragal and a cavetto.

5. Openings:

   a. Doorways and doors: The doorway surrounds in the mansion house are generally of two kinds: single-faced and double-faced. Most of the single-faced surrounds are composed of an ogee backband, a fascia, and a bead. These are found in the ground floor entry/stairhall, the entire second floor, and in the stairhall and the two western rooms on the third floor. The double-faced surrounds are composed of an ogee backband, a fascia, a second ogee, a second fascia, and finally a bead. These are found on all the remaining doorways.

Generally, the doors on the first floor have six panels, the doors on the second floor have four, and the doors on the third floor have two panels.

b. Windows: With the exception of the single fixed false sash in the northeastern corner of the first floor, all of the windows set into the stone walls have a similar appearance. They are entirely of wood with the sill, jambs, and lintels pegged together. Although all the sills, jambs, and lintels were replaced during the 1969 renovation, the windows mirror what probably existed during the Graeme era. The sash frames are uniformly double-hung with changes only in overall dimension and number of lights in the attic dormers.

6. Decorative features: The two eastern public rooms—the parlor and the chamber above—are the most ornately finished in the house. Of the two, there is no doubt that the parlor was the "best room." This fully paneled space is crowned by a bold Georgian entablature embellished with a continuous "wall of troy" motif. The impressive west wall contains an extruded fireplace flanked by the single functioning door and a matching false one on the south. The marble fireplace surround is topped by a wooden mantle; a brick and marble hearth extends out from the firebox which itself is embellished with an iron fireback depicting a coat of arms. Above the mantle is a single panel overmantle surrounded by a crosetted frame and topped with a broken pediment. The sides of the overmantle are emphasized by the breaking out of the pediment above and guttae hanging from the crosetted corners below. The flanking six-panel doors are surrounded by crosetted frames and topped by a raised, full pediment. Each of the windows is contained within a crosetted frame; pairs of paneled shutters rest in canted wall recesses when open.

On the second floor, the eastern chamber above the parlor is also finished to a high degree. The wall is topped by a continuous entablature that, while well-executed, is decidedly more subdued and narrower than that of the parlor. A centralized fireplace on the west wall does not extend as far into the room as that in the parlor, nor does this wall display as rigid a symmetrical arrangement. The firebox has a twentieth-century Delft tile surround and a brick hearth; all of the tile fireplace surrounds date from the 1969 repair/renovation work. There is no mantle, however a crosetted overmantle (minus the broken pediment) identical to the one below—even with guttae— emphasizes the fireplace. The fireplace is flanked by a pair of four-panel doors, fronting closets, contained within rounded frames articulated with "keystones." Lunette windows with three primary lights fill the rounded portion of the frame above the doors. A four-panel door accessing the stairhall stands to the north of the northern closet. As in the

parlor, each of the windows in the room contained operable paneled shutters that fold back into canted recesses when open.

The woodwork and paneling in the parlor and parlor chamber were repaired in the 1960s. Apparently, both rooms' woodwork was substantially damaged before the renovation. In 1916, one architect noted that "there is much decay" and an early-twentieth-century photograph shows the paneling stacked on the parlor floor.[82] Interestingly, both rooms were restored in the 1960s, but the parlor received a great deal more care in its reinstallation than the corresponding upper chamber. In the parlor chamber, numbers written on the eastern wall's paneling—presumably to aid in reassembly—are still visible beneath the varnish. Furthermore, drip marks on many of the panels indicate the finishing work was hastily executed; the sad shape of the south closet door shows sloppy work as well.[83]

In the western second-story chamber, the fireplace has a tile surround and a decorative iron fireback; the office chamber also has a tiling around the firebox. In addition to the paneled closet wall, the eastern third-story chamber contains a carved wooden fireplace surround and a ceiling cornice extending completely around the room. All of the paneled walls in the house terminate in decorative cornices.

7. Architectural furniture: Surprisingly, and like few other contemporary dwellings, the mansion house contains numerous built-in closets. Most of the closets are incorporated in the extruded paneled fireplace walls in various rooms, however a large one is located on the first floor under the stairs. The dining room contains a closet in the paneled wall north of the firebox. The office contains a closet to the right of the fireplace which most certainly is a twentieth century addition. A 1916 folio does not show a closet in this room, however all of the other closets in the house are depicted. On the second floor, the eastern chamber contains a closet to the north and south of the fireplace. The middle chamber also contains closets to the north and south of the firebox. The western chamber contains a closet south of the firebox contained behind a four-panel door. The third-floor eastern chamber contains a closet to the south of the firebox and fronted by double, two-panel doors which are not present in the 1916 folio.

8. Hardware: Nearly all of the mansion house's hardware dates from the 1969 restoration. The new hardware reflects the original whose size and characteristics were estimated through examination of the ghosts

[82]Donald Millar, *Measured Drawings of Some Colonial and Georgian Houses* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Company, 1916).

[83]See paint analysis in HSR, appendix II.

preserved beneath later paint. Notably, the hinges, locks, and doorknob on the exterior door in the north facade are believed to be original. There are remnants of a bell pull system and carpet hooks on the stairs on the first and second stories. Many generations of nails survive in the structure including wrought nails believed to date from the earliest construction period in the 1720s, as well as various types common in the later eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries.

9. Mechanical Equipment:

    a. Heating: The only historic heating system ever introduced in the house are the extant fireplaces. With the exception of the two western third-floor rooms, every room in the building contains a fireplace. After 1958, electric recessed floor heaters were added on all three floors when the house was wired.

    b. Plumbing: Plumbing was never installed in the mansion house.

    c. Electric: Electric service including outlets on the ground and second floors were added after 1958.

10. Original furnishings: With the exception of Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson's lap desk and common book, none of the present contents of the house are original.

D. Site:

1. Historic landscape design: During the Keith era, the site included the unfinished and unused malt house, a tenant house (referred to as the "long-house" during the Graeme era), and a barn.[84] When Graeme renovated the property, he landscaped some of the uncleared land, and built other outbuildings. Graeme's landscaping included many "avenues and Vistas," orchards, a deer park delineated by hedges, controlled forest land, and a formal garden.[85] Graeme also cleared at least two hundred acres for farming. A 1787 ad for the sale of the property described Graeme Park as having the Keith era buildings and the Graeme era additions:

> A garden containing two acres adjoining the mansion house, enclosed by a terrace and a stone walls, a large frame barn, covered with cedar shingles, with plenty of stabling adjoining it, a stone cow-house, carthouse, smoke house, poultry house, and a great number of other necessary outhouses; also a good stone kitchen near the mansion house, with convenient rooms adjoining it for a housekeeper and servants, a good well of

[84]William Parsons Survey of Graeme Park, 1736, Horsham Township Municipal Archive.
[85]Thomas Graeme to John Penn, 1755, HSP.

> water at the kitchen door, with a pump by it, remarkable fine spring of water in the dairy,…There are likewise on said premises two large orchards of the best kinds of grafted fruit, and many other conveniences too tedious to enumerate.[86]

When Samuel Penrose acquired Graeme Park in 1801, the site still had many of the original Keith era outbuildings as well as the remains of the Graeme improvements. Penrose was a Quaker and, generally speaking, the Quakers cultivated a sensibility that nothing should be wasted. Thus, Penrose reused the wood and masonry that was employed in the construction of the earlier outbuildings in the erection of a new house (the "Penrose/Strawbridge mansion"), new barns, a stable, a spring-house—the spring water was originally channeled to the mansion house to serve as water for Keith's alcohol production—and the pond directly to the south of Graeme Park.[87] Graeme's "ornamental" landscaping was cleared for both crops and for livestock pasturing; Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson's garden landscape adjacent to the mansion house was left untended.

2. Outbuildings: The only extant outbuilding on the property is a nineteenth-century barn constructed during the Penrose era. From the evidence ascertained from archaeological excavations in 1958, two outbuildings on the south side of the mansion house were rebuilt as part of the reconstructed courtyard.[88] The smaller one on the east side has been interpreted as a privy, though archaeological exploration has failed to located privy pits anywhere on the site. The larger structure on the west side is interpreted as a detached kitchen. This feature was reconstructed in 1969 on historic foundations; its dimensions match those recorded in the 1798 tax inventory.

PART III: SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

A. Architectural drawings:

Millar, Donald. Measured Drawings of Some Colonial and Georgian Houses. New York: Architectural Book Publishing Company, 1916

Sims, Joseph Patterson, and Willing, Charles. Old Philadelphia Colonial Details. New York: Architectural Book Publishing Company, 1914

Wallace, Phillip B. Colonial Houses: Philadelphia Pre-Revolutionary Period. New York: Bonanza Books, 1931

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[86] *Penn. Packet,* 29 August 1787.
[87] See archaeology reports 1958 and 1961 (summaries provided in HSR, 54-61).
[88] See HSR, 54–58.

B. Early views:

Painting of Graeme Park. Undated—probably early nineteenth century. Graeme Park. Horsham, Pennsylvania.

Buck, William. Etching of Graeme Park. ca. 1850. Chester County Historical Society.

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PART IV: PROJECT INFORMATION

The documentation of Graeme Park was undertaken during the summer of 2000 as part of a larger program to record historic landmarks and historically significant structures in southeastern Pennsylvania. The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), E. Blaine Cliver, Chief of HABS/HAER, and Paul D. Dolinsky, Chief of HABS, with Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, administrators of the site. Funding was made possible through a congressional appropriation for documentation in Southeastern Pennsylvania and supplemented by the Friends of Graeme Park, Jim Dougherty, President. The project was planned and administered by HABS historian Catherine C. Lavoie and HABS architect Robert R. Arzola. The project historian was the winner of the Sally Kress Thompkins fellowship, Jon Lamar Wilson (University of Mississippi). The measured drawings were completed by the architectural Supervisor Corri L. Jimenez (University of Oregon), and by architectural technicians Joshua Aaron May (Washington State University) and Olosz Emese (U.S. ICOMOS/Romania). The drawings were edited by Michael Gibble (The Catholic University of America). Large format photography was undertaken by Jack E. Boucher, HABS Photographer, and James Rosenthal, HABS Photographic Assistant.

ADDENDUM TO:
GRAEME PARK
(Fountain Low)
(Horsham Plantation)
859 County Line Road
Horsham vicinity
Montgomery County
Pennsylvania

HABS PA-579
PA,46-HORM,1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

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National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001